

C<sup>1</sup> essentially the entire exposed surface of mask body 12 is fluid permeable to inhaled air.

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On page 15, line 14, before "Valve cover", insert --As shown in FIG. 8, -- and replace "Valve" with --valve--.

On page 15, line 15, delete "(not shown)".

On page 15, line 16, between "40." and "Valve", insert the following sentence: --The valve cover 50, when secured to the valve seat 26, defines an internal chamber into which the flap-retaining surface is located.--

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C<sup>2</sup> Exhalation valve 14 can be provided with a valve cover to protect the flexible flap 24, and to help prevent the passage of contaminants through the exhalation valve. In FIG. 6, a valve cover 50 is shown which can be secured to exhalation valve 14 by a friction fit to wall 44. Valve cover 50 also can be secured to the exhalation valve 14 by ultrasonic welding, an adhesive, or other suitable means. Valve cover 50 has an opening 52 for the passage of a fluid. Opening 52 preferably is at least the size of orifice 32, and preferably is larger than orifice 32. The opening 52 is placed, preferably, on the valve cover 50 directly in the path of fluid flow 36 so that eddy currents are minimized. In this regard, opening 52 is approximately parallel to the path traced by the free end 38 of flexible flap 24 during its opening and closing. As with the flexible flap 24, the valve cover opening 52 preferably directs fluid flow downwards so as to prevent the fogging of a wearer's eyewear. All of the exhaled air can be directed downwards by providing the valve cover with fluid-impermeable side walls 54. Opening 52 can have cross-members 56 to provide structural support and aesthetics to valve cover 50. A set of ribs 58 can be provided on valve cover 50 for further structural support and aesthetics. Valve cover 50 can have its interior fashioned such that there are female members (not shown) that mate with pins 41 of valve seat 14. As shown in FIG. 8, valve cover 50 also can have a surface 59 that holds flexible flap 24 against flap-retaining surface 40. The valve cover 50, when secured to the valve seat 26, defines an internal chamber into which the flap-retaining surface is located. Valve cover 50 preferably has fluid impermeable ceiling 60 that increases in height in the direction of the flexible flap from the fixed end to the free end. The interior of the ceiling 60 can be provided with a ribbed or coarse pattern or a release surface to prevent the free end of the flexible flap from adhering to the ceiling 60 when moisture is present on the ceiling or the flexible flap. The valve cover design 50 is fully shown in U.S.